

## OUR LAND AND WATER

Toitū te Whenua,  
Toiora te Wai

## *What is Our Land and Water?*

Our Land and Water is a National Science Challenge. National Science Challenges are dedicated and designed to break new ground in areas of science that are crucial to New Zealand's future. In our case, this means, tackling the biggest science-based issues and opportunities facing our country in the area of primary production, and the complex relationship it has with our precious land and water resources.

Enhancing New Zealand's primary sector production and productivity while maintaining or improving land and water quality is our aim. The vision for Our Land and Water is that New Zealand is world-renowned for integrated and successful land based primary production systems, supported by healthy land and water and capable people. We already have research programmes underway including **Mauri Whenua Ora** that specifically target our aim and are working towards our future vision. A fundamental driver in the Challenge is the importance of Māori playing a more active role in the sustainable management and economic development of our land and water resources

## Research Timeline

**June 2016:** Mauri Whenua Ora funding approved

**July 2016:** Mauri Whenua Ora research underway

**June 2019:** Mauri Whenua Ora research complete

## *Finding out more about Mauri Whenua Ora*

This project is about unlocking the potential of Māori land by advancing new production systems and market opportunities, and translating the learning from this to other regions.

The greater context for our work sees many kin groups facing unprecedented phases of economic development through Treaty claim settlements and new entrepreneurial ventures. Treaty claims are major issues for Taitokerau land claimants who are on the cusp, or have just reached, settlement. But kin communities today are no longer simply 'local'; they are resident worldwide and are not necessarily 'attached' to, or involved in, their lands. Meaningful developments within the primary sector require us to address these complex social realities, and balance them with economic and environmental issues. Māori agribusiness is, therefore, highly complex and requires collective thinking, guided by communities themselves.

An underpinning question facing communities is, therefore: what is the right land optimisation for our people now so that they can set in place the right kind of legacy for their descendants? We investigate this question through collaborative social and environmental science and community expertise. Differentiating products based on Māori cultural attributes which stress social and environmental outcomes has the potential to improve and stabilise returns.

## The research has **outcomes** to develop:

1. Shared, multi-iwi led innovation in manuka honey (Stephens, 2006) and forestry, or other identified innovation; which results in enterprise owners and descendant communities being better positioned to lead and operate land innovation within environmental, cultural and economic parameters.
2. A comprehensive economic platform, guided by Te Hiku lands and leadership (sub-regional study); which results in Regional Māori representative groups being able to progress their own land schemes and develop improved decision-making with the aid of new science and tools.
3. Socio-cultural indigenous micro economy concept 'Pā to Plate' (enterprise to descendant 'consumer' study), resulting in a new micro-economy model being developed that captures the optimal land qualities and community values, including cultural and economic wellbeing..

Each foci will uncover specific environmental, economic and cultural value points to advance productivity from land use

that optimises productive earnings with cultural and societal needs, collectively contributing towards developing a broader Taitokerau land and people advancement and wellbeing strategy. And at its heart, this programme responds directly to 'Vision Mātauranga' to the fullest extent possible.

To achieve these three outcomes excellent data and decision-support tools are required. We will map land, water and people assets, explore international 'models' where relevant, find out what Taitokerau people know and want through collaborative (investigation) processes and develop technological tools and plans with them in order to achieve the 3 outcomes.

## Who is involved in the research?

This programme is a partnership among Te Taitokerau communities and Māori incorporations and trusts, University of Otago, Massey University, University of Auckland, Landcare Research, Scion, Zest, Te Whata, San Francisco Estuary Institute. The point of contact for Mauri Whenua Ora is : [merata.kawharu@otago.ac.nz](mailto:merata.kawharu@otago.ac.nz)

